



COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS

LABOUR TURNOVER, MARCH, 1955.

This report gives the results of a survey of labour turnover in Australian industry in March, 1955, and compares these results with those obtained in similar surveys carried out in March, 1949, 1950, 1952, 1953 and September, 1954.

Labour turnover is frequently measured by the number of engagements or separations (whichever is the lower) expressed as a percentage of average employment during the period under review. Table 1 below shows figures of both engagements and separations expressed as a percentage in this way. "Separations" include dismissals and retrenchments as well as numbers of persons who leave of their own volition and a dissection of separations into these classes is given in Table 3.

The period covered in individual returns was not uniform, depending as it did on the dates on which payroll tax returns of individual businesses were made up in respect of February and March. The figures should be interpreted as applying to an average of about $4\frac{1}{2}$ weeks. With the exception of the 1954 survey, which covered the month of September, all the surveys were for the month of March. The trends in labour turnover are most clearly shown by comparing successive turnover rates for March, so as to avoid the effect of seasonal fluctuation. Labour turnover rates are influenced by the seasonal nature of employment particularly in the Food, Drink and Tobacco industry and, to a lesser degree, in other industries.

Industrial Coverage

The surveys are based on a sample within certain industries of businesses subject to Payroll Tax. They exclude small businesses, and religious, benevolent and other similar organizations which are exempt from Pay-roll Tax. In addition, the surveys exclude rural industry, private domestic service, the professions (e.g. architects, consultant engineers, etc.) the shipping and stevedoring industry and all government employment and semi-government undertakings other than banks and airlines.

In March, 1955 total civilian employment in Australia (excluding rural industry and private domestic service) was estimated to be 2,724,000. Total employment in the field covered by the Labour Turnover Survey was 1,599,000 - 59% of total civilian employment. Labour turnover rates were calculated from returns from businesses which employed 41% of the workers in the field covered, including all large businesses and a sample representative of the remainder.

Engagements and Separations

As shown in Table 1, during the years March, 1950, 1952 and 1953 the general trend has been for rates of engagement and separation to fall. This was followed in September, 1954 by a general rising tendency (excluding female engagements). September figures may be to some extent influenced by seasonal factors but the trend is confirmed by March, 1955 figures. This latter tendency is most clearly seen in the case of male workers where turnover rates have risen more sharply between March, 1953 and March, 1955 than for females and, for most categories shown in the table, are as high as they were in March, 1950.

Engagements since 1953 were generally higher than separations and reflected the rising level of total employment. The effect of a decline in employment in 1952 is seen in the fact that separations of manual workers in manufacturing industries were in excess of engagements.

Among the non-manual workers it is noticeable that female rates are about double that of males but differences in rates for male and female manual workers are much less marked.

TABLE NO. 1 : ENGAGEMENTS AND SEPARATIONS : 1949 TO 1955.
(Percentage of average number of employees in each group)

Period	Manufacturing		Other Industries (a)		All Industries (a)	
	Manual Workers	Other Workers	Manual Workers	Other Workers	Manual Workers	Other Workers
MALES						
Engagements						
March, 1949	9.3	1.8	8.1	3.5	8.9	3.0
March, 1950	8.4	2.2	7.3	2.8	8.0	2.6
March, 1952	6.0	1.9	6.5	2.6	6.2	2.4
March, 1953	4.7	1.6	4.8	2.1	4.8	1.9
September, 1954	6.6	2.2	7.5	2.2	6.9	2.2
March, 1955	8.0	2.4	9.2	2.8	8.4	2.7
Separations						
March, 1949	8.5	1.4	7.1	2.8	8.0	2.3
March, 1950	8.7	1.6	7.5	2.4	8.3	2.1
March, 1952	7.0	1.9	6.9	2.6	7.0	2.4
March, 1953	4.2	1.6	4.2	2.7	4.2	2.3
September, 1954	6.0	1.7	6.9	2.1	6.3	2.0
March, 1955	7.5	2.0	8.4	2.9	7.8	2.6
FEMALES						
Engagements						
March, 1949	11.0	3.9	9.8	9.9	10.7	8.5
March, 1950	10.5	4.8	12.1	5.8	11.0	5.6
March, 1952	6.4	4.0	8.1	5.5	6.8	5.1
March, 1953	9.0	4.0	7.3	5.8	8.5	5.4
September, 1954	7.0	4.1	6.0	5.3	6.8	5.0
March, 1955	8.9	5.4	7.9	6.5	8.7	6.2
Separations						
March, 1949	8.9	3.4	9.4	8.2	9.0	7.1
March, 1950	8.6	4.4	11.0	5.7	9.3	5.3
March, 1952	9.7	4.2	9.9	5.8	9.7	5.4
March, 1953	6.1	3.2	4.9	4.6	5.8	4.3
September, 1954	6.6	3.7	5.0	4.2	6.2	4.1
March, 1955	8.9	5.0	7.0	5.6	8.5	5.5

(a) See introductory text for note on industry coverage.

As shown in Table 2 the increase in separation rates for manual workers between March, 1953 and March, 1955, occurred in all industrial groups.

Separation rates for males in the paper and printing industry have consistently been the lowest in the manufacturing group. Separation rates for females in most industries in the manufacturing group are higher than for males.

TABLE 2 : SEPARATION RATES FOR MANUAL WORKERS BY INDUSTRY, 1949-1955.

(Percentage of average number of employees)

Industry	Males					
	March, 1949	March, 1950	March, 1952	March, 1953	Sept., 1954	March 1955
Manufacturing -						
Engineering, metal working and vehicle building ..	8.1	7.4	6.3	4.2	6.2	7.4
Textiles ..	9.1	9.2	9.1	2.5	5.9	7.1
Clothing ..	5.0	6.3	8.5	3.9	5.1	5.4
Food, Drink, Tobacco ..	10.2	13.0	8.8	6.3	5.8	10.0
Furniture, sawmilling and woodworking	11.6	9.9	7.0	3.5	6.1	6.1
Paper, printing ..	4.5	4.8	3.8	1.3	3.0	3.5
Other manufacturing ..	8.3	8.5	7.7	3.8	7.0	8.0
All Manufacturing	8.5	8.7	7.0	4.2	6.0	7.5
Mining ..	3.4	4.1	2.7	1.9	2.5	3.8
Building ..	10.7	8.4	10.9	6.4	10.4	11.8
Road Transport ..	6.7	7.4	4.1	4.1	4.1	9.0
Wholesale Trade ..	5.6	8.1	5.4	4.7	7.1	9.4
Retail Trade ..	5.1	5.6	4.8	2.7	5.4	6.0
All Other (a) ..	(d)9.8	(d)10.5	(d)9.5	(d)3.8	(d)5.7	7.8
All Industries (a)	8.0	8.3	7.0	4.2	6.3	7.8
Females						
Industry	March, 1949	March, 1950	March, 1952	March, 1953	Sept., 1954	March 1955
Manufacturing -						
Engineering, metal working and vehicle building ..	11.6	12.1	10.8	4.9	7.5	9.6
Textiles ..	9.1	7.1	9.0	3.8	5.5	7.0
Clothing ..	5.0	5.8	9.5	6.0	6.8	7.2
Food, Drink, Tobacco ..	21.7	13.7	9.2	10.4	7.8	16.1
Furniture, sawmilling and woodworking	(c)	(c)	(c)	(c)	(c)	(c)
Paper, printing ..	6.6	9.3	10.4	3.8	6.3	5.8
Other manufacturing ..	7.5	13.2	10.5	5.1	4.8	8.5
All Manufacturing	8.9	8.6	9.7	6.1	6.6	8.9
Mining ..	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)
Building ..	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)
Road Transport ..	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)	(b)
Wholesale Trade ..	4.9	6.7	5.4	4.4	7.0	5.9
Retail Trade ..	5.5	6.3	7.9	2.8	4.8	5.3
All Other (a) ..	(d)11.4	(d)13.5	(d)12.1	(d)6.6	(d)4.9	8.2
All Industries (a)	9.0	9.3	9.7	(d)5.9	6.2	8.5

(a) See introductory text for note on industrial coverage. (b) Included with "all other". (c) Included with "other manufacturing". (d) Revised.

Separation Rates by Class of Separation

In these surveys separations have been classified by type of separation (dismissed, retrenched, left and other). Businesses submitting returns were asked to class employees as "dismissed" where employment was terminated on the employer's initiative for disciplinary or other reasons; as "retrenched" where the employment was terminated, permanently or otherwise, on the employer's initiative for reasons such as a reduction in the scale of operations, breakdown in machinery, shortage of materials, completion of the job etc.; as "left" where employment was terminated by the employee's initiative; and as "other" where the separation was due to death, injury, permanent retirement (including women leaving to be married) enlistment in the forces or other reasons.

Table 3 shows for male and female workers, an analysis of separations in March, 1953 and March, 1955, in the main industry groups. Similar information for March, 1950, and March, 1952 can be obtained from the reports on Quarterly Business Surveys No. 20 and No. 24. Figures for September, 1954 are shown in a report entitled "Labour Turnover - September, 1954", issued on 1st March, 1955.

As Table 3 shows, the rise in the separation rate between March, 1953 and March, 1955 among manual workers is due almost entirely to the increase in the number of workers leaving on the employee's own volition.

TABLE 3 : ANALYSIS OF SEPARATIONS FOR MANUAL WORKERS,
MARCH, 1953 AND MARCH, 1955.
(Percentage of average employment in each group)

	March, 1953					March, 1955				
	D.	R.	L.	O.	TOTAL	D.	R.	L.	O.	TOTAL
MALES										
Manufacturing -										
Engineering, vehicles, etc.	0.6	1.0	2.5	0.1	4.2	0.8	0.5	6.0	0.1	7.4
Textiles ..	0.3	0.2	1.9	0.1	2.5	0.7	0.3	5.9	0.2	7.1
Clothing ..	0.5	0.3	3.0	0.1	3.9	0.8	0.6	3.7	0.3	5.4
Food, Drink, Tobacco	0.6	4.1	1.5	0.1	6.3	1.0	3.2	5.7	0.1	10.0
Furniture, Woodworking	0.5	0.5	2.3	0.2	3.5	0.6	1.8	3.6	0.1	6.1
Paper, printing ..	0.1	0.2	0.9	0.1	1.3	0.7	-	2.7	0.1	3.5
Other manufacturing	0.7	0.9	2.1	0.1	3.8	0.9	0.1	6.9	0.1	8.0
All manufacturing	0.6	1.3	2.2	0.1	4.2	0.8	1.0	5.6	0.1	7.5
Mining ..	0.1	-	1.6	0.2	1.9	0.4	-	3.3	0.1	3.8
Building ..	1.7	1.0	3.7	-	6.4	1.9	1.4	8.3	0.2	11.8
Road Transport ..	0.5	0.3	3.0	0.3	4.1	0.9	-	8.0	0.1	9.0
Wholesale and Retail Trade	0.6	1.0	2.2	0.2	4.0	1.1	0.9	6.4	0.1	8.5
Other Industries ..	0.8	0.4	1.9	0.7	3.8	1.9	0.3	5.5	0.1	7.8
All Industries	0.6	1.1	2.3	0.2	4.2	0.9	0.9	5.9	0.1	7.8
FEMALES										
Manufacturing -										
Engineering, vehicles, etc.	0.5	0.7	3.6	0.1	4.9	1.0	0.7	7.7	0.2	9.6
Textiles ..	0.3	0.1	3.2	0.2	3.8	0.6	1.0	5.2	0.2	7.0
Clothing ..	1.8	0.4	3.4	0.4	6.0	1.6	0.8	4.1	0.7	7.2
Food, Drink, Tobacco	0.7	4.8	4.8	0.1	10.4	0.7	7.1	8.1	0.2	16.1
Paper, printing ..	0.4	0.5	2.7	0.2	3.8	1.1	0.1	4.1	0.5	5.8
Other manufacturing	1.0	0.4	3.7	-	5.1	0.6	0.1	7.5	0.3	8.5
All manufacturing	1.1	1.2	3.6	0.2	6.1	1.1	1.7	5.7	0.4	8.9
Wholesale and Retail Trade ..	0.8	0.6	1.6	0.3	3.3	0.6	1.1	3.6	0.2	5.5
Other Industries ..	1.3	-	5.3	-	6.6	0.4	0.1	7.6	0.1	8.2
All Industries	1.1	0.9	3.7	0.2	5.9	0.9	1.4	5.8	0.4	8.5

(D. Dismissed; R. Retrenched; L. Left; O. Other Reasons).

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